

Suite provençale
for Ocarina, Triangle, and PowerPoint

Virginie Greene

PowerPoint does not have a good reputation with humanists. They do not view it as a medium for thoughtful scholarship, astute criticism, or creative commentary. Can you imagine Walter Benjamin or Jacques Derrida presenting their thoughts as a PowerPoint slide show? The name lends itself to jokes (“Powerless and Pointless” among others). It evokes a brand of battery or a drilling tool rather than a frame for dreams or a virtual path for exploration, investigation, musing, and doodling. The fact that it is too often used to invest a weak argumentation based on spurious facts with an air of no-nonsense authority and straightforward honesty contributes to its low popularity in some academic and artistic circles. PowerPoint sounds vulgar and threatening with its two capital Ps erected like flagpoles indicating with no uncertainty where the wind is blowing from: hightech, and where it is blowing to: highertech. Powerpoint brings to mind at once

- bullets
 - sub bullets
 - sub sub bullets
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 - bullets

- corporatism
- monologism
- rigidity
- hierarchy
- homogenization
- quantification
- simplification
- electronics
- bad vibes
- lack of aura

(and, worse of all)

- [illegible]

But

This is due to a lack of imagination - A hidden art of Powerpoint waits to be discovered.

Powerpoint
Needle point
Point of view
Punctum

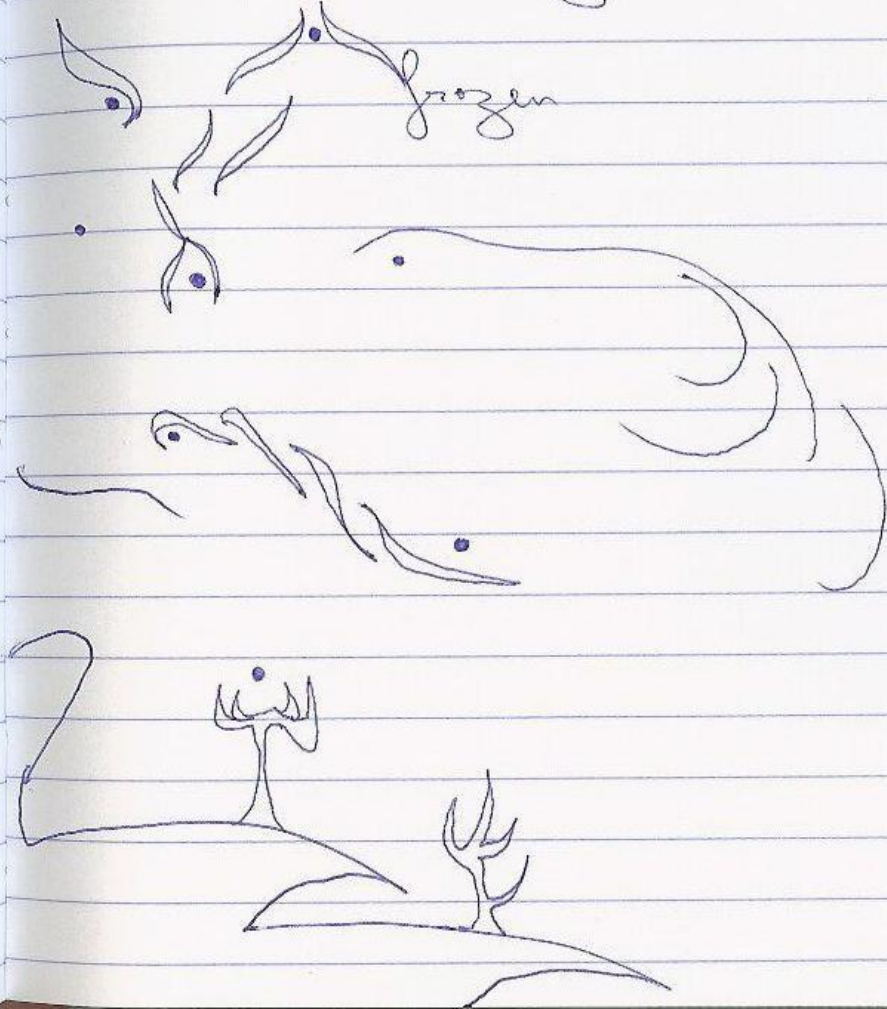
Assembling a powerpoint is like making a collage of words, fonts, signs, icons, images, pictures, maps.

Instead of organizing one's thoughts in sentences, paragraphs or pages, one would organize them in slides - or pictures.

Doodles can only be done by hands and in a dreamy mood.

But they can be recorded in electronic form

frozen



Platitudes and spurious arguments may be
handwritten in small notebooks.

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As less and less writing is done by hand, the manuscript
becomes more and more an object of fetishism.
It has been touched by the

Hand.

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Ancient manuscripts or manuscripts by Famous People are relics of bodies and minds out of our reach. Present manuscripts by non famous people generally interest only their author, or, after his or her death, bereaved relatives and friends - so we hope. In all cases, manuscripts offer the trace of a touch and display the disjunction between an "I, who once wrote this" and an "I, who now read this."

OK! Stop pretending you are Anne Frank and tell us seriously, without doodling around, what you plan to add to the corpus of learned comments on old provençal poetry (given that you are neither an expert in codicology nor in old provençal poetry).

Herein should appear a grand declaration of purpose and intention, but I have a hunch my preliminaries have been circuitous enough to tire most of my audience, so I replace the declaration by a short interlude for ocarina and triangle, before moving to the fetish, I mean the manuscript.



This ink is very pale

I can't read this column, and I bet it's
not transcribed anywhere

That's OK. I am sure it's not very interest-
ing anyway. Proof is they did not even fill
in the illuminated capital at the top of this
column

I can at least see that it's in provençal

Must be a kind of *vida* or *razo*
(a long one, so hopefully it isn't
Jaufre and the countless of Tripoli's
silly story)

For the sake of focus, I'll assume this
column is not within the purview of
this essay. Let's ignore it

Little machines to
produce atoms or atoms

Musical notations: nice
but I am not a musicologist

I like those three capitals. I picked this manuscript for no other

LNQ with big nosed
faces and tentacles

The little balls or spheres
indicate something is in
motion

This is Languan li jern son lone en mai.
I have taught this poem too often to be sure

I still like it



en peen.

que ret
tan uale
uen. 34

sol. & pa

Prophetia

1875

10. 11. 12.

1850

segun lo

ys. cum
haler. e

water, &
messed.

၇၅ ခဏ

နာပု ခပ်

quæ m.

a puzba
Cu
m...

leu ter a

7 ab omni

Tenor. q
E car
ile m

[illegible]

de loub. an milhaun d'amez em n'ostre plai. co' chaupme d'amez
de loub, mas q' deu uueh' meo' atel' q'ant' m'ietre' moe'
pauir. deu amez end' foz' anuig. **jaufic. r. uell.**

e touts, mais is qeu tautz mes q'as quasi marier
 pain, deit ames eno fos amin. **Au Re. ruel.**

 An lo volint vol el fillos, dona amor en quier
 en pren. e mou son cuer auzen toz os. e remeta sa par
 souen. el rieu son cuer el par son gen. pel nouel tpo
Dun amant car los cuicos
 que retha. m uen al co. grun loy chier. car no sai uo
 tan uale. cor e auz q' sonam fos. sien fasia ruzar par
 uen. el coos a q' son telgar e cor. e sen re q' telcoumen. co
 fmo: tonh se faler. **D**eitamos fol fore collors. ve
 iton e pueus foma tomen. car lay ar loy meculmols. p
 q'et latur ab loy uueq. mas fol teutan noz tal men. can
 sey mells no se. la senh. ce m ab mays te tel plazer
Deitamos fol tar collors coles. q' canz vey nau uay
 lay cohen. neure mes q' muros. moz e q'la ma fia
 gen. e fos ciuats q' atan leu. q' greu er mays q' laren
 amors no lam far remaner. **Q**uoz. alegren pue
 uos. p tal car nau momells chier. e fol e ten au
 nudes q' tveu nauay no cor auz. La mie ve mo tel
 ten. q' uol en temen denh. e ma tonar en ton ce.

These
 In lo re te de la founpna fiedes fi co d
 sol. e pa la flor dignissima. et romberet del him. vo

[illegible]

Maybe a herbal tea

signat lo *stain?* lro. che con che uer. che uancla
Che uer. che uol el segie
 che uancla uer lalen
 a solterio. qe qe uancla
 che uer. che uol el segie
 che uancla uer lalen
 a solterio. qe qe uancla
 che uer. che uol el segie
 che uancla uer lalen
 a solterio. qe qe uancla

[illegible]

lap cōmī gēna. e aua maif sōfir tā malamanā. p
ques mair metā e puf fēng dō. canr tom tā te

A puerbe uergonlos, ca many daunces ei e q'per sim
A mien ca nre e de loñ manciat, no ma dña m
 rmar en cransi, q'mes mala e filiana guerrera,
 e fi p'ocar ar, aum defenada, q'u no no per nobar ne
 gna odarce, mal car lo per adre, amores, e uigil
 rre non lo fur p'omati.
A fia guerra m
 solanficencia, ar fin fur mal non au p'me uel
 m e a fug m cambi ma carriena, aia mo buel
 ur fu la fimbiana, p q'u no foi tel fign, p'ocor,
 m tel m'ar, p q'm f'aralo, plag e mac tal cil
 yro for amia.
A m no uel r'ento m f'ar q' q'
 f'or, pul catelheia q' a m'et op'anti, e fi ar
 quera e d'oma loit de name p'efusi, el autar
 q' q' de pur g'mos, el ter p'mmer p'afel le reitor.
 fi fu ma dña q' de en tal b'olida, p'm

*I wish this initial
column so I see
my purview*

tenor. qui sel sap tenor. uenir. p deu men uer. effu-
A car no si fulten. p de l'una d'istors. q' m' plon-
 me no e. pro. p' lo se. can ge comen. puer. p' uia
 li comen. a m' nig. l'aman. uia. cal. s' b' f' o' r' o' s' a
 lor. nac e f' i' e' u' u' a' d' e' r' . t' a' g' i' a' d' o' s' s' a' d' e' m' a' t' e' .
 p' e' a' r' e' p' u' s' p' e' n' d' e' n' t' a' . a' q' u' i' s' t' e' s' t' o' r' p' r' o' . e' p' a' e' d' i' a' t'
 e' u' o' l' u' e' l' i' . e' g' a' u' g' e' e' n' e' r' e' p' l' o' a' r' . e' d' a' m' a' t' d' o' s' s' a' d' e' m' a' t' e' .
 e' s' o' r' a' r' d' i' n' p' a' c' e' . e' s' a' p' i' e' n' g' a' m' a' n' h' . e' a' n' s' e' l' u' i' u' i' u' .
 f' e' l' i' c' i' t' a' t' .
A l' h' e' r' s' n' o' a' n' t' e' p' u' s' g' r' a' f' i' a' . m' a' s' e' r' f' a' p' a' s' .
 e' o' m' e' n' s' i' . e' m' a' d' o' n' a' t' e' r' o' . e' d' e' l' d' i' a' t' u' a' s' e' r' f' a' p' a' s' .
 e' d' . c' a' s' t' i' t' o' r' o' r' a' r' e' d' e' h' u' m' i' l' i' t' a' t' e' m' a' d' e' . e' c' a' m' e' n' n' e' y' .
 u' i' c' e' d' e' . a' m' a' u' i' o' h' e' r' i' u' i' n' o' n' a' r' . m' a' s' s' e' l' p' i' n' c' e' .
 m' a' r' .
A l' i' c' o' p' l' o' m' e' n' t' e' n' t' e' s' . l' a' b' i' a' s' f' a' p' a' s' .
 m' o' d' e' r' n' e' . q' u' i' e' r' a' m' i' s' h' i' c' e' r' e' . e' a' n' t' e' l' i' u' e' r' f' a' p' a' s' .
 e' u' p' i' o' n' e' e' r' e' c' t' u' l' a' e' p' a' r' . a' c' i' s' t' e' n' t' p' u' s' g' r' a' f' i' a' .
 l' a' y' s' e' f' o' r' a' m' o' i' . m' e' f' e' s' a' m' a' n' d' e' l' i' a' n' c' o' r' e' u' i' u' i' u' .
 a' m' e' n' t' i' n' .
B e' l' l' i' m' u' r' e' . m' a' a' r' e' f' i' a' . n' o' n' e' s' e' p' p' a' s' .
 n' o' c' o' m' p' a' n' i' . c' a' r' n' i' g' i' l' d' i' a' b' a' r' e' . u' i' d' e' l' o' u' i' u' i' u' .

*Moreover I don't
know much about
P. Vidal*

I wish this initial was in the other column so I could include it in my preview



The creature has one head and two tails or tentacles. Or the lower tail may be viewed as a small peg leg. The head seems ready to shoot a black projectile through the page by way of its tongue. The tails or limbs seem on the contrary to be attracting matter from the outside. The L shaped body stands squarely like a cabin, a cabinet, a lantern, a stove, or a very primitive camera. The creature turns its back from the poem and its musical notation, running away toward the prosaic left column. Maybe it does

not like this kind of music and would rather sing another song. The creature may be a musical box: if you pull the loop on the top, it cranks a mechanic air. The tentacles suck sounds from outside. The sounds agglutinate in spherical compounds, which fall into the box. Their chance collisions produce music. After a while, used spheres are expelled and replaced by fresh ones for new combinations of sounds. This imaginary device emblemizes the experimental and technological nature of courtly lyric. What sings is not a subject but a machine. There is no author, but engineers and designers. In the same fashion, there is no author to this slide, which is brought to you by electronic know how.



Although the pictemes are the same than in the preceding initial (anthropomorphic profile, tentacles, spheres, all attached to the letter shaped as a container), the general effect is quite different. The head looks less like a mask or a gargoyle, and more than the quickly sketched likeness of a man with a hawkish nose. The letter N fits the back of his head like a helmet secured by straps to his forehead and chin. His mouth is tightly closed and the sphere attached to it seems to lock it like a key or a gag. No running away: the man's head is kept in a cage like a bird. Were his lips unlocked, God knows what abuses, supplications, screams and whispers he would proffer. Courtly poetry is subjective indeed, but at a price for the subject supposed to sing, to love, and to love to sing.

a green profile
blooms out of
the L that
sprouts buds
leaves sap and
seeds across
the page plants
do not sing
though as they
silently grow
and conquer
their space on
earth the green
man's grave



all things morph
into each other
like soup who
could say that a
rock does not
grow a heart
and a heart
does not bear
fruits a poem
does not make
sense at some
point in time as
it produces at
once a poet and
a reader

Deceptively easy the first stanza puts the reader in her place. She does neither know how to sing, nor to compose poetry in provençal, nor to understand the reasoning at work in the poem. She is invited though to listen again and again: “*com pus lauziretz mais valra.*” The added value depends on the incapacity of the listener to occupy the place of the singer. If all could sing, compose and understand, poetry would be common speech and nobody would pay attention to it. Poets need non poets to pay attention. Poets need that non poets pay attention. Poets need non poets in order that someone pay attention. I claim the seat of the non poet non laureate.

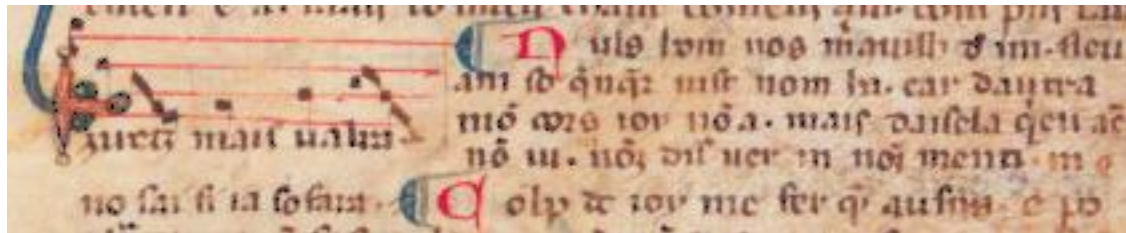


No sap cantar quil so nom ditz. nil vers trobar quilz motz nos fay. ni no sap de rima cos vay. si razo non enten e si. mais lo mieu chant comens aisi. com pus lauziretz mais valra.

She does not know how to sing who does not say a sound to me. She does not compose a poem who does not find the words. She does not know the way rhymes work if she has no reason in her. Here is my song. The more you listen, the best it's worth.

*Nuls hom no
meravilh de mi.
sieu am so
quenquar vist
nom ha. car
dautra mon cors
joy non a. mais
daisela quieu
anc non vi. ni
noms dis ver ni
noms menti. ni
no sai si ja so
fara.*

Another self enclosed riddle that does not seem to have much to do with the first stanza. It is not about composing and listening, but about loving and seeing, loving someone who has never seen you and whom you have never seen. The missing side of the square is a statement about her love. I love her; I have never seen her. She has never seen me; does she love me?

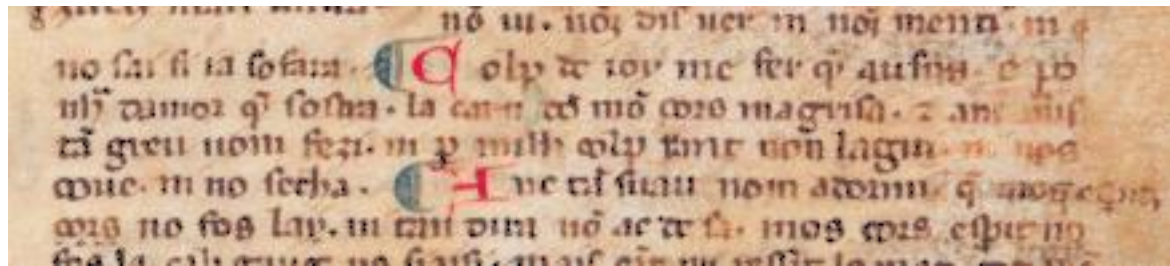


Beside being blind to me, she is also mute to me, unless there is something to say that is neither true nor false. But “me” here is him, the male poet; this present non poet listener would fit better in her shoes (if she has any). The stanza does neither say nor imply that she has never heard or read him.

May no one wonder at me if I love who has not yet seen me. For my heart has no joy from any one except her whom I never saw. She did not tell me the truth; she did not lie to me; I don't know if she will ever.

*Colp de joy me fer quem ausira
e ponha damor quem sostra. la
carn don mon cors magrisa. &
anc mais tan greu nom fezi ni
per nulh colp tant non lagui ni
nos mue ni no secha.*

A stroke of joy hits me that'll kill me
and love postponed that'll melt my flesh
and make my body slim. Never did I
cause so much grief to myself; never
did I waste away so much from any
blow; no change, no relief for me.



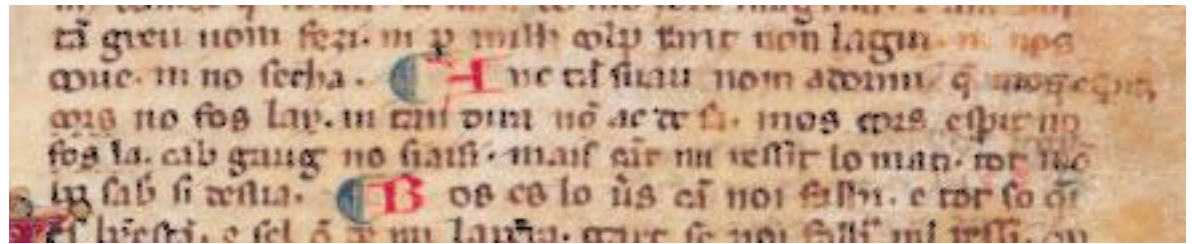
Joy hits, love is postponed, and this entails a loss of bodily matter. Should I consequently feel guilty? If this poem requests my love like a love letter, I am sorry to say I received it a few centuries too late. I can only witness the emaciated state to which love of logic and poetry can lead someone who claimed earlier to know how to sing, compose and understand a poem. “*ni nos mue ni no secha*” suspends heart, body, poet and poem in the no time zone of the manuscript page—or in the private, delightful hell of cultivated frustration.

Anc tan suau nom adormi
que mos esperitz ~~eors~~ no fos
lay. ni tan dira nom ac de sa.
mos cors ~~espriz no fos la~~. cab
gaug no siaisi. mais cant mi
ressit lo mati. tot mon bo
saber si desva.

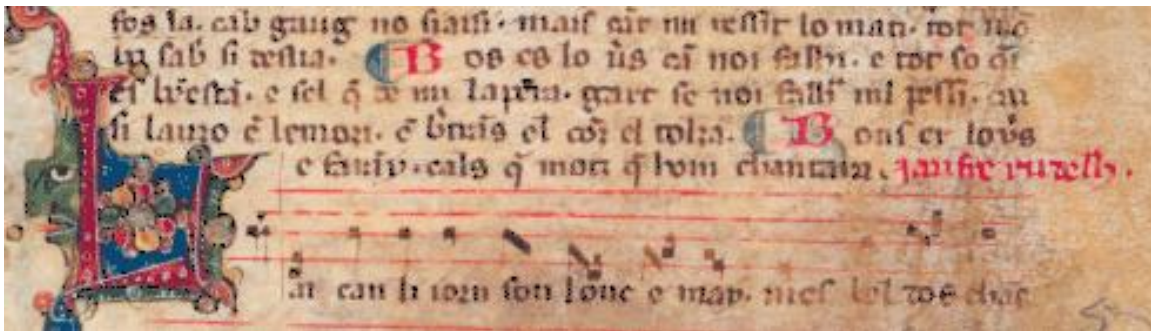
I never felt asleep so lightly,
that my mind ~~heart~~ was not
there. And my heart ~~mind~~ was
~~not there~~ was never so angry
over here that joy did not
comfort it. But when I awake in
the morning, all my good
knowledge is gone.

No matter how sweetly I sleep,
my mind remains present and
my heart is so full of anger that
no joy can comfort it. But when
I wake up in the morning, my
true knowledge is gone.

No matter how lightly I sleep,
my mind is far away, and no
matter how much anger my
heart contains, joy comforts it.
But when I wake up in the
morning, my pleasant
knowledge is gone.



I have tried different interpretations of this stanza, which is plagued by double negations and ambiguities, not mentioning the corrections indicating that the scribe had a hard time making sense out of it. Depending on how one understands *suau adormi* (it can indicate a sweet sleep or a light sleep) and *bo saber* (it can indicate an agreeable delusion or a harsh truth), one ends with an ode to sleep and the soothing delusions that dreams bring to suffering lovers, or with a clinical description of sleep deprivation due to love pains, resulting into a state of hyperconsciousness that unfortunately does not last: with day light, love illusions come back. *Et si jamais ma povre ame amoureuse Ne doit avoir de bien en vérité, Faites au moins qu'elle en ait en mensonge.* Louise Labbé, lucidly, called for the sweet lies that she knew to be unable to comfort her (but that was a few centuries later).



“Bos” again teases me. Is the poem good because it is true, pleasant, or beautiful? From the poet side, it is good when it is done and that everything falls into place: rhymes are rounded, stanzas are squared, and meaning will take care of itself. It is time now to pass it on, not to the unseen, unheard and unborn female reader who may fall in love with it from afar—or not, but to some guy here and now who will probably misunderstand half of it and forget the rest. Still, he will transmit it and the transmission will make the poem “good” or keep it “good” no matter the shortcomings of the performer. *In saeculi saeculorum*, singers, copyists, glossators, critics, and readers will ally to get it right while playing it wrong. Or the opposite. Poets need non poets to pay attention.

Bos es lo vers can noi falhi. e tot so quei es ben esta. e sel que de mi lapenra. gart se noi falha nil pessi. que si lauzo en lemozi. e bertans el coms el tolza. Bons er lo vers e farany, cals que motz que hom chantara.

The poem is good: I did not fail and all it contains goes well. The one who will learn it from me should keep from messing it up and butchering it, for they should hear it as it is those in Limousin, Bertrand and the count in the Toulousain. The poem will be good. There, they will make it so no matter what words will be sung.

But non poets get easily bored or distracted. They need disruptions and changes to keep interested.

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I suggest that you take now a short break and go on wikipedia or youtube to listen to a little air of galoubet, the traditional provençal flute and tambourine.



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If you do not like galoubet that much, then good old ocarina and /or triangle will be a nice alternative (note that since each needs both hands to be played, they cannot be played simultaneously like the tambourine and flute of galoubet). There are numerous airs played on triangle and numerous airs played on ocarina available on the internet.

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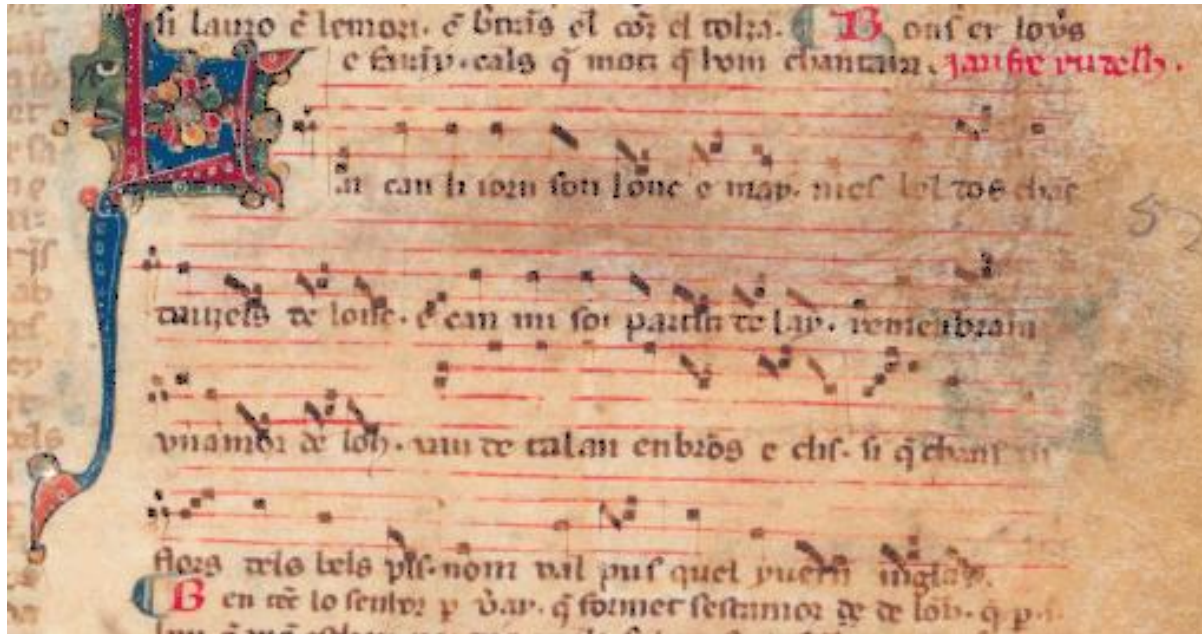
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*No matter what you listen to, do not forget to come back. The next poem I'll misinterpret is the famous *Languan li jern son lone en mai**

Lai can li iorn son lonc e may. mes bel dos chans dauzels de lonc. e can mi soi partitz de lay. remenbran un amor de lonh. vau de talan enbrons e clis. si que chans ni flors del bels pis. nom val pus quel yvern inglatz.

There, when the days are long in May, I enjoy the sweet song of birds from afar; and when I have left, I remember a love from afar; I go as I wish stooped and downcast, and neither song nor flower from pine trees I praise more than icy winter.

Days tend to be longer in May than in April in the Northern hemisphere but they are still shorter than in June. However, *mai* being consonant with *amar*, *amor* and various forms of the first person pronoun, it is a preferable emblem



of the poet's *saison mentale*. So, when days are long, in May and in *me*, the first person of this poem enters into a chronic, seasonal depression, which birdsongs trigger. The poem itself is not expected to trigger a similar

condition in its listeners. The birdsongs and the poet song operate on different planes. The former are part of the setting of a discursive situation; the latter is a narrative, split between the time of the saying and the time of the said, and between the "I" who sings now and the "I" who is the hero of the song. Nothing extraordinary in this, except that the singing "I" remembers now its past avatar, the hero "I," as remembering. I remember now that at certain moments of the year and in certain circumstances including birdsongs, I used to remember something that saddened me. This does not seem to imply that the present remembering of the past remembering is also associated to sadness. No wonder that a love memory evoked through a double remembering act would be qualified as *de lonh*, as a phenomenon separated from its origin. Birdsongs too generally come to us disembodied and from a distance. We don't see the singers we hear, and we

locate them “over there” and not “right here” even if “over there” is a few yards away. There is nothing depressing in that (I am currently hearing birds singing through an open window, despite the whir of the fan, and feel grateful that there are still some birds to sing in my environment.) In the poem sadness falls on the listener when he moves away from the place where he can hear the birds (*mi soi partitz de lay*) and realizes he cannot take them with him, except in his memory. Then he remembers something else that obliterates the *hic et nunc* of a long May day and renders it equivalent to a short, cold, winter day. The first rhyme of the stanza “*may*” becomes equal to the last rhyme “*glatz*.” Now I remember that I used to remember something comparable to birdsongs and vaguely labeled *amor de lohn*, but powerful enough to substitute a memory to a perception. The substitution process is repeated as the poet composes his poem, replacing his current perceptions by the memory of a memory. In this first stanza, three moments in times and two cognitive faculties are compressed to form a compact

apparatus. At the first moment, or present of the enunciation of the poem, the poet remembers but does not perceive, or rather does not pay attention to what he perceives of his surroundings. We don’t know in what month of the year he is composing his poem. At the second moment, or past of the



narration, the poet both perceives (the birdsongs) and remembers (the love from afar). At the third moment, or anterior past of the narration, the love from afar is a perception not yet transformed into a memory. But what sort of perception can be a “love from afar”? Our only clues are

the comparison with the birdsongs and the description of the mood the memory of this love induces in the reminiscing “I.” The only defining quality of this love is that it involves a haunting separateness. Being in love from afar is like continuing to hear the birdsongs when they are no more physically audible. The lover from afar adopts the posture of people who hear voices and talk to invisible beings (without a cell-phone), shoulders hunched over their secretive relationship, oblivious of their surroundings, eyes downcast, ears deaf to anything but the voice, the song, the sound of what is not here. Where, then, does the non poet listener stand in this stanza? Afar too, but not in the same “afar” than the beloved. I am not a poet, and I am not in the mind of this poet. However, what he displays in front of me is a piece of his mind. In the same way that in *no sap cantar quil so nom ditz* he brings to the fore his nocturnal dreams—whether truthful or delusory—without revealing their content, in *lai can li jorn son lonc e may* he presents a particular interlace of perceptions and memories without providing any details that could help a non poet listener to create a fictional space of projection. Imagine what

would happen if someone was projecting a film, outdoors, at night, without a screen, and moving constantly the camera. At some point a tree may be projected over a tree, a body over another body, but that would be mere coincidences and the temptation to construct a scene with these moving fragments would be constantly thwarted. The experience may be enjoyable though, if one accepts to stay afar, remains awake, and does not insert her own memories into the compact apparatus this first stanza proposes. What can be shared



are not the contents but the apparatus itself. Thus the poetic commonplace “when I am sad it is winter no matter when I am sad” becomes an opportunity to ask oneself “when is when?” and “where is where?” Which will lead to the conclusion that there is no joy and no sadness elsewhere than here and now. The rest is madness. Very ordinary madness. And lack of logic. For if spring is winter, if afar is constantly present to my mind, if love means separateness, if what I want is never here, if what I want is “never here,” I might as well jump in the first well on my way to Megara.

Oops! It looks like I am losing my manuscript in the shuffle.



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Not that I don't like Jaufré Rudel. Or courtly poetry in general.



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Anyway, it seems I truly lost my manuscript. What about a drink here and now?

Herbal tea anybody?